

Message Text

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 JAKARTA 4163

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ID

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF THE 1978 MPR GENERAL SESSION

REF: (A) JAKARTA 3731; (B) JAKARTA 4034

1. SUMMARY: MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY FROM ALL FACTIONS ARE IN GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THE 1978 GENERAL SESSION WAS MORE DEMOCRATIC THAN ITS PREDECESSOR IN 1973, BUT REACTION TO TH RESULTS OF THE SESSION VARIED ACCORDING TO POLITICAL FACTION. THE PPP IS UNHAPPY WITH THE REFERENCES TO PANCASILA AND MYSTICAL GROUPS IN MPR RESOLUTIONS, REMAINS SUSPICIOUS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS REGARDING THE GUIDE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PANCASILA (P4), BUT APPEARS READY TO RETURN TO A MORE COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GOVERNMENT. IT MAY PICK UP THE POST OF CHAIRMAN OF PARLIAMENT AFTER FAILING TO GET A MINISTERIAL POST. THE MPR AS AN INSTITUTION WOULD APPEAR TO BE STRONGER FOLLOWING THIS SESSION, BUT CONSENSUS AS A POLITICAL TOOL HAS LOST SOME
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OF ITS CHARM FOR THE MAJORITY AND THUS SOME OF ITS UTILITY FOR THE MINORITY. END SUMMARY.

2. WHILE THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT ACHIEVED MOST OF ITS GOALS IN THE 1978 GENERAL SESSION OF THE MPR, RE-ELECTING PRESIDENT SUHARTO BY ACCLAMATION AND GETTING OFFICIAL MPR APPROVAL FOR ITS VERSION OF THE GUIDELINES OF STATE POLICY

(GBHN) AND OTHER RESOLUTIONS WITH FEW SIGNIFICANT AMENDMENTS, TWO MAJOR SETBACKS MARRED THE HOPED-FOR "SUCCESS" OF THE SESSION-THE RESORT TO VOTING AND WALKOUTS BY THE MOSLEM DEVELOPMENT UNITY PARTY (PPP) OVER THE ISSUE OF RECOGNITION FOR KEPERCAYAAN (JAVANESE MYSTICISM), AND THE REFUSAL OF SULTAN HAMENGKUBUWONO IX TO CONTINUE AS VICE PRESIDENT, ACCOMPANIED BY REPORTS OF HIS DISAGREEMENT WITH SUHARTO OVER GOVERNMENT POLICY. IN ADDITION, THE HIGHLY VISIBLE USE OF HEAVILY ARMED TROOPS TO INSURE ORDER AND THE RASH OF MINOR PROTEST INCIDENTS BEFORE AND DURING THE SESSION CONTRIBUTED TO AN ATMOSPHERE OF TENSION WHICH EMPHASIZED THE LACK OF A BROAD-BASED CONSENSUS SUPPORTING ALL GOI POLICIES.

3. GOVERNMENT AND GOLKAR LEADERS, HOWEVER, PUBLICLY EXPRESSED GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH THE RESULTS OF THE SESSION. MANY, INCLUDING THE CHAIRMAN OF THE REGIONAL DELEGATIONS FACTION SUNANDAR PRIYOSUDARMO (GOV. OF E. JAVA), SAID THEY FOUND THE ATMOSPHERE AT THE 1978 SESSION MUCH MORE DEMOCRATIC THAN IT HAD BEEN IN 1973, AND THERE WAS A HIGH DEGREE OF TOLERANCE OF DIFFERING OPINIONS. SUNANDAR NOTED THAT, AFTER SOME MPR MEMBERS WALKED OUT OF SESSIONS IN ROTEST, THEY RETURNED FOR SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS, PROVING THAT THEY WERE AWARE OF THE NEED TO PRESERVE UNITY IN SPITE OF POLICY DIFFERENCES. SEVERAL PPP MEMBERS AGREED THAT THE 1978 SESSION WAS MORE DEMOCRATIC THAN ITS PREDECESSOR, CONFIDENTIAL

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CITING THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS DISAGREEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT POLICY AS WELL AS TO HAVE SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

4. THE PPP FACTION WAS NATURALLY LESS PLEASED ABOUT THE RESULTS OF THE MPR DELIBERATIONS. A PROMINENT PPP MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT TOLD EMBOFF MARCH 30 THAT WHILE HIS PARTY MUST ACCEPT THE MPR RESOLUTIONS ON PANCASILA AND KEPERCAYAAN IT COULD NEVER AGREE WITH THEM. HE CONFIDED THAT THE PPP HAD ONLY RESORTED TO VOTING AND WALKOUTS AFTER CONSIDERABLE INTERNAL DEBATE, AND HAD BEEN FINALLY INFLUENCED BY ISALMIC RELIGIOUS LEADERS WHO WANTED A FIRM STAND AGAINST GOLKAR PRESSURES. HE COMMENTED THAT, DUE TO A BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATIONS, GOLKAR HAD BEEN TAKEN BY SURPRISE WHEN THE PPP WALKED OUT AND INITIALLY THREATENED STRONG REPRIALS, BUT SINCE THE SESSION CLOSED A REASONABLY CORDIAL RELATIONSHI HAD BEEN RE-ESTABLISHED. (GOLKAR LEADERS PRIVATELY AGREED ON LATTER POINT.)

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5. THE PPP, HE SAID, WILL PROBABLY ACCEPT A GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL TO RE-INSTALL THE PPP'S IDHAM CHALID AS CHAIRMAN OF PARLIAMENT. PPP LEADER AMIN ISKANDAR PUBLICLY STATED HIS FACTION'S INTEREST IN GETTING THE POST OF PARLIAMENT CHAIRMAN ONCE AGAIN AND SAID HE WAS URGING A PARTY CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS IT. THE BEST CANDIDATE, HE ADDED, WOULD BE IDHAM CHALID.

6. THE RECTOR OF BANDUNG ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, AND CHAIRMAN OF THE WEST JAVA ULAMAS COUNCIL, HEZ MUTTAQIEN, TOLD REPORTERS THAT THERE WERE MORE POSITIVE RESULTS THAN NEGATIVE ONES FROM THE MPR SESSION, AND MOSLEMS SHOULD SUPPORT THE RESOLUTIONS THEY COULD AGREE WITH WHILE HOPING TO WORK SOMETHING OUT LATER ON THE ISSUES OF THE GUIDE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PANCASILA (P4) AND KEPERCAYAAN. HE SAID THERE WAS NO NEED FOR CONFRONTATION OVER KEPERCAYAAN, BUT HE HOPED THAT ITS ADHERENTS WOULD NOT BE INFECTED BY SUBVERSIVE POLITICS (COMMENT: MUTTAQIEN APPEARED TO BE COUNTERING CHARGES OF ISLAMIC DISSIDENCE BY HINTING THAT MYSTICS
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MIGHT BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO COMMUNIST INFILTRATION.)

7. THE MOSLEMS HAVE INTERPRETED THEIR EXCLUSION FROM THE

NEW CABINET AS PUNISHMENT FOR OPPOSITION TO CONSENSUS IN THE MPR. AMIN ISKANDER AND CHALIK ALI OF THE PPP TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE FAILURE OF THE PARTIES TO BE REPRESENTED IN THE CABINET WAS THE DIRECT RESULT OF THE MPR DEVELOPMENTS, BUT THEY DID NOT THINK THAT THIS WOULD CREATE A FORMAL OPPOSITION BLOC WITHIN THE INDONESIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM. PDI SECRETARY GENERAL SABAM SIRAIT AGREED WITH THESE VIEWS IN A PRESS INTERVIEW LATER THE SAME DAY.

8. COMMENT: WE SEE THREE SIGNIFICANT RESULTS FROM THE 1978 MPR SESSION:

A) WHILE THE MPR AS AN INSTITUTION OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED BY FUNCTIONING AS SCHEDULED, NOT ONLY AS A FORMAL MECHANISM BUT THIS TIME AS AN OPEN FORUM TO DISCUSS POLITICAL DIFFERENCES, THE TRADITION OF CONSENSUS HAD BEEN UNDERMINED. VOTING IS NOW VERY POSSIBLE IN FUTURE SESSIONS OF PARLIAMENT AS THE POLITICAL PARTIES, HAVING NO PART IN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT, CONTEND WITH THE GOVERNMENT OVER LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS. ALTHOUGH THIS IS PERHAPS AN INEVITABLE AND EVENTUALLY HEALTHY STEP IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, IT POSES SOME PROBLEMS FOR ALL. FORMAL CONSENSUS IS VERY MUCH INGRAINED IN THE TRADITIONAL MYSTICQUE OF THE INDONESIAN PEOPLE AND ITS ABSENCE CAN BE POPULARLY INTERPRETED AS A LOSS OF GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY. THE MINORITY PARTIES WOULD, ON THE OTHER HAND, LOSE HERETOFORE IMPORTANT POLITICAL LEVERAGE IF THREATS TO WITHOLD CONSENSUS LACK TEETH.

B) THE SULTAN'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE VICE PRESIDENCY NOT ONLY DAMAGED PRESIDENTIAL PRESTIGE BUT MAY HAVE INDIRECTLY SLOWED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH BY
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DEPRIVING IT OF ADAM MALIK'S LEADERSHIP. MALIK HAD BEGUN THE CHALLENGING TASK OF PROVIDING PARLIAMENT WITH THE MEANS TO VOERSEE THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND INITIATE LEGISLATION. IT IS HIGHLY DOUBTFUL THAT THE PROCESS WILL BE CONTINUED WITH THE SAME ELAN UNDER A PPP CHAIRMAN.

C) FINALLY, THE ALREADY TROUBLESOME GAP BETWEEN THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP AND THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY WAS WIDENED. MOVES TOWARD RECONCILIATION SUCH AS IDHAM CHALID'S APPOINTMENT TO THE PARLIAMENTARY CHAIR MAY REMOVE SOME BUT CERTAINLY NOT ALL OF THE SUSPICIONS AND RECRIMINATIONS CREATED BY THE P4 AND GBHN VOTES.
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